News Release

US Army Corps
of Engineers
Northwestern Division
Public Affairs Office

12565 West Center Road
Omaha, Nebraska 68144-3869

Contact: Paul Johnston
(402) 697-2552

Phone: (402) 697-2552
Cell: (402) 305-3821

Date: Apr. 15, 2003

Relief to Missouri farmers is on the way. The Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced today that it is awarding a $200,000 emergency contract to reopen an impassable stretch of the Missouri River that has hampered the movement of fertilizer this spring.

Jefferson City-based sand and gravel company, Capital Sand, will begin work next week to dredge 50,000 to 70,000 tons of sediment from a shoal near the intersection of the Osage and Missouri rivers.

"This dredging will quickly return the Missouri to the minimum service depth of 8 feet and allow commercial traffic to resume," said Col. Don Curtis, the district commander.

The decision to dredge comes after Missouri Gov. Bob Holden telephoned U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leaders in Washington D.C. and asked for assistance in reestablishing navigation on the river.

"The governor's call last week for support echoed concerns I had about the ailing situation of navigation on the river," Colonel Curtis said. "It is important for the economy of Missouri and the country that this transportation lane be reopened safely and quickly."

Curtis and his team of experts reviewed a host of flow reestablishment options, including Governor Holden's request for releasing upstream water, before making the decision to dredge.

"While we are not in the position to provide additional water to the river, I understand the importance of keeping this vital lane of transportation open," Curtis said. "After consulting with my team of experts, they advised me that dredging was the most effective and quickest way in reestablishing navigation on the river."

The Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining navigation on rivers in parts of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska.